

Message Text

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ACTION EUR-12

INFO OCT-01 ISO-00 SAJ-01 CIAE-00 DODE-00 PM-03 H-02

INR-07 L-02 NSAE-00 NSC-05 PA-01 PRS-01 SP-02 SS-15

USIA-06 IO-10 ACDA-05 EB-07 /080 W

----- 012761

R 131711Z MAY 75

FM USMISSION USBERLIN

TO SECSTATE WASHDC 890

AMEMBASSY BONN

INFO AMEMBASSY BERLIN UNN

AMEMBASSY LONDON

AMEMBASSY MOSCOW

AMEMBASSY PARIS

USMISSION NATO

C O N F I D E N T I A L USBERLIN 905

E.O. 11652: GDS

TAGS: PGOV, PINT, WB, GE

SUBJECT: BERLIN BOUNDARY RESCUE: DROWNING ON MAY 11

1. SUMMARY: DROWNING OF TURKISH YOUNGSTER IN SPREE

MAY 11 HAS FOCUSED ATTENTION ON STALLED BOUNDARY RESCUE

TALKS BETWEEN SENAT AND GDR. END SUMMARY.

2. FIVE-YEAR OLD TURKISH BOY DROWNED IN SPREE RIVER

AT APPROXIMATELY 12:30 P.M. ON MAY 11

IN KREUZBERG NEAR OBERBAUMBRUECKE WHERE ENTIRE WIDTH

OF RIVER LIES IN EAST BERLIN. WEST BERLIN FIREMEN WHO

ARRIVED ON SCENE ABOUT FIVE MINUTES AFTER BEING TELEPHONED BY

BYSTANDER WERE DENIED PERMISSION TO SEARCH FOR BODY BY EAST

GERMAN BORDER GUARDS ON PATROL BOAT IN VICINITY, AND

HAD TO RESORT TO PRODING WATER WITH BOAT

HOOKS. FROM TIME CHILD ENTERED WATER HE APPARENTLY

WAS LOST TO VIEW (WATER IS VERY CLOUDY AT THAT POINT)

AND WAS PROBABLY DEAD BY TIME FIRE DEPARTMENT ARRIVED.

FIRE DEPARTMENT DIVERS WHO SUBSEQUENTLY ARRIVED AT

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SCENE WERE ALSO DENIED PERMISSION BY EAST GERMANS TO

ENTER WATER, AND ONLY ABOUT FORTY MINUTES AFTER CHILD FELL IN
WATER DID EAST GERMAN PATROL BOAT ARRIVE WITH DIVERS
ABOARD. EAST GERMANS RECOVERED CHILD'S BODY AT 2:12 P.M.
FROM POINT APPROXIMATELY 6 FEET FROM WHERE HE WAS SEEN ENTERING
WATER; BODY WAS TAKEN TO EAST BERLIN.

3. MISSION RESPONDED TO PRESS INQUIRIES MAY 12 IN NAME
OF THREE ALLIES EXPRESSING DEEP REGRET THAT THE EAST
GERMANS HAD PREVENTED EFFORTS TO SAVE CHILD'S LIFE AND
OUR CONCERN THAT EAST GERMANS HAD PLACED POLITICAL CONSIDERA-
TIONS ABOVE ABOVE HUMANITARIAN. GOVMAYOR SCHUETZ AND OTHER BERLIN
LEADERS HAD PREVIOUSLY ISSUED STATEMENTS CONDEMNING EAST GERMAN ACTIO
N.

PRESS REACTION HAS BEEN UNIVERSALLY NEGATIVE TOWARD GDR.
EAST GERMAN PRESS AGENCY ADN REPORTED THAT "DESPITE RESCUE
EFFORTS BY BORDER SECURITY PERSONNEL, CHILD HAD ALREADY
DROWNED BY THE TIME HE COULD BE FOUND." ADN ARTICLE
CRITIZED SENAT FOR FAILING TO AGREE TO RESCUE AGREEMENT
PROPOSED BY GDR.

4. BOUNDARY RESCUE AGREEMENT HAS BEEN SUBJECT OF
INTERMITTENT NEGOTIATIONS BETWEEN GDR AND SENAT FOR OVER
TWO YEARS. MAIN PROBLEM IS THAT GDR HAS SOUGHT THROUGH
UNACCEPTABLE LANGUAGE (E.G. REFERENCE TO SPREE RIVER
AS STATE BORDER BETWEEN CAPITAL OF GDR AND INDEPENDENT
POLITICAL ENTITY OF WEST BERLIN) TO MAKE SUCH AGREEMENT
INSTRUMENT OF THREE-STATE POLICY. WE HAVE BEEN WORKING
WITH SENAT TO ACHIEVE AGREEMENT WHICH WOULD MEET
HUMANITARIAN PURPOSE BUT WITHOUT USING TERMINOLOGY IN
FLAT CONTRADICTION TO OUR VIEW OF BERLIN AS ONE CITY.

5. AMBASSADOR HILLENBRAND RAISED MAY 11 DROWNING WITH
AMBASSADOR ABRASIMOV DURING LUNCHEON-MEETING MAY 12(SEPTEL),
BUT WE ARE KEEPING THIS APPROACH CONFIDENTIAL.

6. SENAT CHANCELLERY CHIEF HERZ ASKED LIAISON OFFICERS
DEVOTE REGULARLY SCHEDULED MAY 13 MEETING TO DISCUSS
HOW TO PROCEED ON BOUNDARY RESCUE MATTERS, AND SENAT
HAS ANNOUNCED IT WILL SEEK EARLY DATE FOR RESUMPTION
OF TALKS WITH GDR.
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7. CDU CAUCUS, ACCORDING TO TAGESSPIEGEL, PLANS TO
INTRODUCE SPREE DROWNING (THERE HAVE BEEN 5 SINCE 1966)
AS URGENT QUESTION AT SCHEDULED MEETING OF HOUSE OF
REPRESENTATIVES ON MAY 15. SELIGMANN

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